

# Silver Banner

## Winter 2011

Issue 74

Editor: Kelly Pizzi

### ***Mission Statement:***

The mission of the Hilltown Assoc. of Councils on Aging is to provide and promote programs, activities and services to the senior citizens of the hill town communities of Becket, Dalton, and Peru.

### **Inside this issue:**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Medicare Update          | 2 |
| Veterans Luncheon        | 3 |
| Paul Mark Reception      | 3 |
| Veterans History Project | 3 |
| Protect Your Donations   | 4 |
| Help Numbers             | 4 |
| Disaster Preparation     | 5 |
| MEMA Winter Alert        |   |
| Inner Creativity         | 6 |
| 1-800-AGE-INFO           | 7 |
| Holiday Party            | 7 |
| Wii Bowling              | 7 |
| COA Van Service          | 7 |
| Center Offerings         | 8 |
| Off Site Offerings       | 8 |
| Suggestions needed       | 8 |
| Triad                    | 8 |

## **DALTON SENIOR CENTER UPDATE**

### **Greetings From Your New Director:**

This has been a whirlwind month for me at the Dalton Senior Center! I have met so many wonderful people who use the Center and am looking forward to meeting more of you.

The volunteers are some of the best I have seen in action - from the kitchen crew and receptionists to Board and Committee Members. Some spend so much time working here I thought they were on payroll my first week or so!

The COA Van drivers do everything they can to accommodate appointment times and try to ensure that wait times are not too long.

As you know Sarah Fontaine and Pattie Pero are two of the best em-

ployees I could have in the center as they go above and beyond everything they do.

I would like to thank those of you who have sat and chatted with me about your needs and how the Senior Center plays such a large role in your lives. I have enjoyed speaking with you and I can't begin to express how meaningful your insights have been and the role they will play in future programming, which I expect will be shortly after the new year.

But I am not done yet! If you would like to meet with me and discuss your visions for the future of the Center, call me at 684-2000 ext. 11 and I will be happy to arrange a time where we can sit and discuss your thoughts. I am looking forward to it!

*Kelly Pizzi*

### **AARP TAX-AIDE BEGINS FEBRUARY**

For more than a decade the senior center has completed federal and Massachusetts tax returns for seniors. Last year we served more than 80 clients in Dalton. This program is sponsored by AARP in partnership with the IRS, with no charge to clients.

Dick Lacatell and Anne Ubertaini were tax counselors in Dalton last year and are trained and tested by the IRS. They will be completing returns again in 2012. The Tax-Aide program files only basic tax returns and is focused on the types of returns filed by seniors.

Appointments fill quickly and those requesting assistance are encouraged to call early. Clients will be helped starting in February and will run through March. Call Sarah or Kelly at the Senior Center for more information about the program or to schedule an appointment.

## Medicare Update

### Can I still change my Medicare Plan?

The 2011 Medicare Open Enrollment period ended on December 7, but there are still a few changes you can make, if you qualify.

#### For those with a **Medicare Advantage Plan:**

Between January 1 and February 14, you can leave your plan and switch to Original Medicare, but you cannot switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan. Your Original Medicare coverage will begin the first day of the following month. If you drop your Medicare Advantage plan during this period, you will be able to join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan to add drug coverage. Your prescription drug coverage will begin the first day of the month after your enrollment. You may also add a supplement at this time.

#### For those with a **Tufts Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (drug coverage only) in 2011:**

If you did not select a different Medicare drug plan for 2012, then you are currently without

drug coverage. You have until the end of February to enroll in a new Part D drug plan for 2012, which will begin the first of the month after your enrollment.

For those with **Prescription Advantage** or getting “**Extra Help**” paying for prescription drugs:

You can change your plan anytime during the year. Those with Prescription Advantage can do this only once each year. Those with “Extra Help” can change every month if necessary.

Trained SHINE (**S**erving **H**ealth **I**nformation **N**eeds of **E**lders) volunteers can help you! They offer free, confidential counseling on all aspects of health insurance to anyone on Medicare. Call Pattie Pero at 684-2000 at your senior center and ask for a SHINE appointment. You can also call 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636), then press or say 3. Once you get the SHINE answering machine, leave your name and number. A volunteer will call you back, as soon as possible.

## Senior Center News



### Veterans Luncheon

In honor of Veterans Day a luncheon was held at the Senior Center on November 14th. Served were 88 Dalton Veterans and those in the county who have shared their stories through the Veterans History Project.

Participants were treated to a delicious family style lunch provided by Epoch Assisted Living at Melbourne. Ty Belanger performed the POW/MIA Ceremony after being welcomed by Select Board Members John Boyle and William Chabot.

If you or you know of any Dalton Veteran or non resident who participated in the Veterans History Project that did not receive an invitation to the lunch, please call and be sure we have their contact information for future events.



### NOTICE:

#### Reception and Budget Talk With Representative Paul Mark

On Tuesday January 24, 2012 at 1:00 the Dalton Senior Center will host a special informational reception with Paul Mark in review of Governor Patrick's release of his fiscal year 2013 budget.

The failure of the Super Committee to reach agreement and introduce a balanced plan will reduce Federal contributions to states for programming, and will place an even larger burden on our own strained budget. Come and learn how to advocate effectively to ensure that Dalton's needs are known and prevent a hostage situation with vital services.

**Note:** Paul Mark also keeps open hours at the Senior Center the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

### Veterans History Project

The Veterans History Project is looking to expand the submitted histories including the Korean and Vietnam War as well as chronicle the more recent histories of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Pakistan. Also collected are the stories of those who supported troop efforts at home. All histories become the part of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

# Make Sure Your Charitable Gifts Go to the Right Place

With the holiday season upon us, many people will donate money to charitable organizations. Unfortunately, it is also the season for deceptive and fraudulent solicitations.

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation offers the following tips for charitable giving:

Never donate to a charity that you know nothing about, especially charities that pop up suddenly in connection with a recent natural disaster or news story.

Don't make assumptions when you hear words like "police" or "firefighter" in an organization's name. Although an organization claims it has local ties or works with local police or firefighters, it doesn't necessarily mean contributions will be used locally.

Check out the charity before you donate. You can find information about charities at: Massachusetts Attorney General's Office non-profits & charities document search, National Association of State Charity Officials, IRS approved

charities, Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance, Charity Navigator, American Institute of Philanthropy, and GuideStar.

Request written information about the charity, its mission, how your donation will be used, and proof that your contribution is tax deductible.

Do not reveal your personal or financial information, including your Social Security number or credit card and bank account numbers, to anyone who solicits a contribution from you.

If solicited in person, always ask to see the solicitor's identification.

Never give your credit card number or cash to a solicitor. Write a check payable to the charity, not the individual soliciting your donation.

## Keep records of your donations for tax purposes.

*From the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation the Consumer Insider Vol. V No. 6*

## Scammed? Get Help!

If you think you have been scammed by a bogus charity operation, contact these agencies and organizations for assistance. First step: Call your local police department!

**Office of the Attorney General**  
**The Not-for-Profit Organizations/**  
 Public Charities Division  
 One Ashburton Place  
 Boston MA 02108  
 (617) 963-2101  
[charities@state.ma.us](mailto:charities@state.ma.us)

**Federal Trade Commission (FTC)**  
 877-FTC-HELP (1-877- 382-4357)

**BBB Wise Giving Alliance**  
 4200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 800  
 Arlington, VA 22203

**LOCAL HELP: Mary Shogry-Hayer**  
**Berkshire County District Attorney's Office**  
 7 North Street Pittsfield, MA  
 413-443-5951

## How Prepared are we for Disaster?

Often when we think of disaster we think of hurricanes with the magnitude of Katrina or earthquake in Japan triggering giant tsunamis.

The fact is, disasters can happen at any time and can range from a house fire affecting one individual household or blizzards and ice storms impacting thousands. As we have seen this past fall with Irene and Lee, even the Berkshires experience an occasional hurricane or two.

Weather patterns over the past few years have indicated that we will likely see more unusual, severe weather events.

### *So how prepared are you?*

- ◇ If you needed to evacuate from your home today, right now, would you be able to do so?
- ◇ Will you need assistance?
- ◇ If so, is there someone in your home to help you?
- ◇ Does anyone outside of your home know you need help?
- ◇ Where will you go?
- ◇ Do people (friends/family) know to look for you there?
- ◇ Do you know where your people will be and how to reach them?
- ◇ Do you have a "Grab and Go Kit?" containing medications and personal care supplies that will last at least three days?

Answers to these questions can make a disaster a bit less stressful.

Do you know of any senior who is isolated and does not have anyone to check on them? If so, contact your Council on Aging to ensure that outreach programs know they are out there.

## **MEMA POSTS ROOF COLLAPSE & STORM DRAIN SAFETY INFORMATION**

### ***Snow Buildup & Subsequent Heavy Rain Can Present Dangers***

FRAMINGHAM, MA – "If not cleared off, dry, fluffy snow piled on roofs can act as a sponge, absorbing any additional sleet and rain, adding weight and stress to structures," states Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Director Kurt Schwartz. "Flat, commercial roofs are most susceptible if they are not draining properly. Additionally, MEMA encourages citizens to clear storm drains in their neighborhoods to minimize local flooding problems from this run-off."

In many cases, roof ice dams can form causing water build-up, leading to interior damage. To minimize the risk of over-stressing a building roof due to accumulated or drifting snow:

- Be on the alert for large accumulating snow build-up or snowdrifts on your roofs.
- If roof snow can be removed, from the ground, with the use of a snow rake (available at most hardware stores), do so. Use caution, as metal snow rakes conduct electricity if they come into contact with a power line.
- Try to avoid working from ladders, as ladder rungs tend to ice up. Snow and ice collect on boot soles, and metal ladders.
- Flat roofs can be shoveled clear, but only if it is determined that the roof is safe to stand upon. Exercise care when on the roof to avoid potentially dangerous falls.
- Flat roof drainage systems should be kept clear to minimize the risk of excess roof ponding in the event of subsequent heavy rainfall or melting.
- Large icicles can form on roof overhangs, but do not necessarily mean ice damming is occurring. Icicles overhanging doorways and walkways can be dangerous and should be carefully removed.
- All of the mentioned actions should only be performed by able-bodied adults, as the snow is heavy, and roofs and other surfaces may be slippery. Protective headgear and eye protection is recommended.

For more MEMA and Winter Preparedness, go to the MEMA website at [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema).

## Tap Into Your Inner Creativity

Individuals who engage in creative activities enjoy a sense of well-being. Creativity may also help reduce stress and improve physical functioning.

Julie Wade, community life leader at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center in Dedham, and Regina Dain, clinical supervisor, Creative Arts Therapy at HRC in Boston, offer the following tips to help seniors tap into their inner creativity.

- Don't be afraid to try new activities. Whether it's a music, movement or art program, you're never too old to learn.
- Follow your passion.
- Look in the local paper and community center bulletins or websites to find out what programs are offered near your home. It is a great way to make new friends and learn something new.
- Your local Council on Aging can be a resource for programs taking place in your community.
- Join a choral group or chamber ensemble, open art studio or a dance class to connect with others with common interests.
- Attend classical, jazz or folk music concerts, dance performances or art exhibitions.
- Take a music appreciation class or art class through an adult education program.
- Listen to music. Regular listening to music of your choice may provide calming and enjoyable moments in your daily life.
- If you have experienced a change in health status, and feel you can't pursue the activities you enjoy, consult a recreation therapist or creative arts therapist who can adapt the activity for you.

Learning to tap into your inner creativity may take a couple of attempts. If at first you don't find something you enjoy, it's OK to try a different activity. Experiment until you find one that you enjoy and is meaningful to you.

*Hebrew Senior Life affiliated with Harvard Medical School*

## Heart Smart For Winter Stressors

The holiday season is a time that usually gladdens our hearts as we gather with friends and family. But it's also a time when our own hearts are under additional stress.

During winter, the rate of deaths and hospitalizations for heart disease and stroke can increase by more than 50 percent. A recent study in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association* found that the rate of heart-related deaths (as well as deaths from other causes) rose sharply between Dec. 25 and Jan. 7, and peaked on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

There are many reasons why winter is hard on the heart. These include: Shorter Days, Cold, Disrupted Routines, Flu, Stress, too much Holiday Cheer and too much Exercise.

What can you do to keep your heart healthy during the winter?

First of all, be aware of your physical condition. Before the snow flies, make an appointment with your doctor. Fall is a great time to schedule a physical examination, learn if you have risk factors for heart disease, and start appropriate treatment if you're diagnosed with high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes.

Even if your doctor determines that you're healthy enough to shovel snow, be careful. Here are some tips that can help lessen the risk of a heart attack or stroke when shoveling snow: Go slow and rest every 15-30 minutes, check your pulse rate before shoveling and wait until you are at that level before beginning again; avoid caffeine, nicotine and postpone alcoholic beverages until after the shoveling is done.

## Holiday Party a Huge Success!

The Dalton Senior Center held its first Holiday Party on December 15th. We were able to accommodate 110 guests and the sign up sheet filled within two days! Sadly we were not able to accept reservations from all that called but we were able to accommodate most.

This was a learning experience for us as this was the largest party we have hosted since the Center opened in February.

Many thanks go out to Craneville Place who sponsored the meals; Elder Services who prepared the food and managed the kitchen; and the many volunteers who helped set up and serve our patrons. A special thanks goes out to our Town Manager, Ken Walto, for donning his Christmas cap and apron and helping to serve our guests. Many of the people attending were happy to see you and said they enjoyed watching you have such a good time!

Are you at least 60 and have a problem with your in-home caregiving services?

Do you know someone who does?

**If so, please call us!**



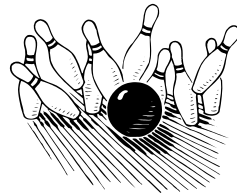
(1-800-AGE-INFO)

Press **#5** to speak to an Elder Services Ombudsman.

## ARE YOU INTERESTED IN Wii SPORTS?

The Dalton Senior Center is currently organizing a Wii bowling group.

If you are interested in trying out Wii come to the Dalton Senior Center on Fridays from 1—3 p.m. starting January 13th and try this fun game!



## Dalton COA Van Service

The Dalton COA operates a lift van Monday through Friday. The service is available for all Dalton residents age 60 and over and disabled of any age.

Reservations for rides must be made a minimum of 24 hours in advance. The majority of trips are for medical appointments, but you can also do your banking, go to the hairdresser or barber, shopping or other needs. We transport within Dalton and to Pittsfield. If the schedule allows, we will also go to the Berkshire Mall.

Trips to scheduled COA activities (lunch, exercise class, etc.) are \$1.50 each way; all other trips are \$3.00 each way. Payments are made

to the COA office. For more information, call 684-2000.





Phone: 413-684-2000  
Fax: 413-684-4033  
Email: dcoa@bcn.net

40 Field Street Extension  
Dalton, MA 01226

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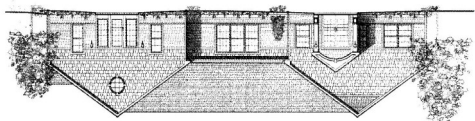
*Marcia Brophy, Dalton  
Helga Knappe, Dalton  
Sonny Nelson, Becket  
Joan Moylan, Becket  
Barbara Lufkin, Peru*

**Board of Directors**

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Dalton, MA 01226

The Dalton Senior Center is a proud participant in TRIAD. Triad is a community collaboration with local law enforcement including County Sheriff's Office, Berkshire District Attorney's Office. We meet the third Wednesday of every month at 1 pm here at the center.



## **PROGRAMS & EVENTS at the DALTON COA:**

(NOTE: CENTER PROGRAMS HAVE A \$2 FEE PAYABLE TO THE SENIOR CENTER SOME HAVE ADDITION TO INSTRUCTOR FEES; EXCEPT SENIOR LUNCH. A \$2 DONATION IS PAYABLE TO ELDER SERVICES ONLY)

**LUNCHES:** Mondays and Thursdays at noon. Make your reservation at least 24 hours ahead.

**OSTEO-EXERCISE:** Tuesday and Thursday 10-11:30 and 12:30-2 (no afternoon the first Tuesday of the month). Thursday 10-11.

**FOOT CLINICS:** 9-3 by appointment. Call 684-2000: FEE: \$25

**BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC:** Forth Thursday FREE

**PITCH:** Fridays 9:30–11:30 Recruiting new and seasoned now!

**BRIDGE:** 1-4 Thursdays. BEGINNER class Wednesday 1-3.

**OIL PAINTING CLASSES:** Tuesdays, 12:30-3 PM Instructor Fee: \$15

**MAH JONGG**—Fridays from 10:15 AM to 12:30 PM.

**KNITTING/CROCHETING** Tuesdays 1–3

**QUILTING** Thursday 10:30–3

**TAI CHI** Thursdays 1:30 sliding instructor fee \$5–\$8

**SHAKE YOUR SOUL** Wednesdays 10-11 Instructor Fee \$3

**COMPUTER CLASSES** Wednesdays 3 - 4, laptops available.

Haven't found an offering at the Senior Center yet that suits your taste? Now is your chance! Come to the Coffee Café any weekday morning and discuss your thoughts with the new Director.

You can also email your suggestions to [dcoa@bcn.net](mailto:dcoa@bcn.net)

## **Council on Aging Events off Site:**

**"Veteran of the Week":**, from the Veteran's History Project shown Saturdays on Chanel 16 of Time Warner Cable.

**Life Program:** (Living is For the Elderly) is held at Craneville Place. Upcoming dates are January 9 & 23 and February 6 & 20, March 5th and 19th from 2:30-3:30.